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SPECIAL ESTIMATE

REACTIONS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD TO CURRENT COMMUNIST TACTICS



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REACTIONS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD TO CURRENT COMMUNIST TACTICS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable effects of current Communist "peace" tactics on the peoples and governments of the non-Communist world.

ESTIMATE

1. The Communist shift in tactics has been manifest for so brief a period that there is as yet little evidence on which to base an estimate of the effects upon the peoples and governments of the non-Communist world. The popular reactions have been on the whole at least guardedly hopeful, while the reactions of most governments and political leaders have been tentative and cautious.

2. The fact that the change in tactics followed almost immediately on Stalin's death could easily be interpreted by the free peoples as a real change in Soviet policy. Moreover, the moment is one in which the governments and peoples of the non-Communist world are likely to be receptive to conciliatory gestures by the Kremlin because they are presently confronted with such problems as uneasiness over possible US measures to end the Korean War, the delay in the ratification of the European Defense Treaty and the German Contractual Agreements, and economic strains attendant upon efforts to raise defense programs to higher levels. Communist concessions on the POW issue sufficient to bring about an armed truce in Korea combined with minor concessions elsewhere and a series of conciliatory gestures and statements could be well calculated to play upon this receptivity.

3. The peoples and governments of Western Europe would welcome even minor conces-

sions as a contribution to peace, but the Western governments would be disposed to await further Soviet acts in the conviction that minor concessions, and even the signing of an Austrian peace treaty, would not end the menace presented to Western Europe by Communism and Soviet power. However, in the unlikely event that the Kremlin offered to surrender its control over East Germany and agreed to the establishment of a united, democratic and neutralized Germany, the governments of Western Europe, including the West German Government, would almost certainly accept such a proposal as evidence of a genuine shift in Soviet policy.¹

4. If, as we believe probable, the Kremlin is unwilling to accept any solution of the German problem which would jeopardize Soviet control over East Germany, we do not believe the "peace" tactics of the USSR would wreck NATO or have other decisive results in West-

¹ The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believes that with respect to Germany, the Kremlin may be willing to withdraw its troops from East Germany, if the Soviet Union considered that by doing so, it could force the Western Powers to withdraw their troops from West Germany, frustrate the EDC program, and the rearmament of Germany. The Communists may also make proposals for free elections and for the reunification of Germany, in the hope that they would be able to secure a demilitarized and neutral German state.

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ern Europe. However, the Western defense effort would probably slacken, military budgets would be cut, and present force levels would be reduced.

5. A relaxation of tension, no matter how slight, would be used by the French as an excuse to delay ratification of EDC. The French reaction to EDC would be even more negative, if the USSR went beyond conciliatory gestures and minor concessions and, for example, agreed to an Austrian peace treaty. However, over the long run, French action on EDC would probably be determined by the unwillingness of France to jeopardize the alliance with the US or to risk a German-American "understanding" from which France would be excluded.

6. Far Eastern issues which may arise in connection with or subsequent to an armistice in Korea are likely to be the most immediate source of danger to the relations between the US and its European allies. The views of the US and these allies might seriously diverge on a political settlement in Korea, on the future of Formosa and the Chinese Nationalist Government, on Communist China's admission to the UN, and on trade with Communist China. The consequences of such divergence would be most serious if the European allies of the US believed that the US was responsible for the failure to settle Far Eastern issues, and that this failure prevented the settlement of other pressing issues, particularly in Europe.

7. If an armistice were concluded in Korea, there would probably not be fundamental shifts in the alignment of the non-Communist Far Eastern states. An armistice would result in a widespread belief in Japan that a major barrier to normal political and economic relations in Asia had been removed, and while the alignment with the US would continue, there would be strong pressure for the resumption of economic and political relations with Communist China and the USSR. An armistice would create serious problems for the Chinese Nationalists and the Republic of Korea. In Southeast Asia, the effects of an armistice would be determined in part by Communist ability to convince the governments in that area that the Indo-China war

was a colonial war and that the Viet Minh was not an instrument of Communist imperialism. In any case, the neutralist governments of Burma and Indonesia would probably support Chinese Communist efforts to gain UN membership.

8. Communist "peace" tactics would probably have only minor effects in the Middle East and South Asia, where the importance of the East-West struggle has tended to be overshadowed by local concern over more immediate problems such as the Palestine dispute, the Kashmir issue, and the vestiges of colonial power in the area. Greece and Turkey would remain committed to the West. India would feel vindicated in its refusal to align itself with either power Bloc. In Iran it is unlikely that the Soviet "peace" tactics would include a lessening of Tudeh agitation against Western influence, and this agitation would probably be more effective if Iranian fear of Soviet aggression declined. In Egypt and Iraq, the Communist "peace" tactics would strengthen Nationalist arguments against Western control of military base facilities. The prospect for the conclusion of regional defense arrangements involving Western participation, such as MEDO, would be further diminished.

9. Ostensibly attractive trade offers which could be expected to accompany the "peace" tactics might constitute an increasingly formidable Communist weapon, particularly if there were economic reverses in the West. Japan would be particularly receptive to Communist trade offers following a Korean armistice because any reduction in American military expenditures in Japan would bring serious economic problems to the fore almost at once. In West Germany any contraction of export markets would greatly increase the pressure for trade with the Bloc.

10. We believe that Kremlin proposals on disarmament are not likely to find acceptance in most non-Communist countries or to divide the Western allies so long as major political issues remain outstanding between East and West.

11. The reactions of non-Communist peoples and governments will be influenced greatly by the manner of the US response to the new

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Communist tactics. Should the US response be seen abroad as adamantly negative, there would be a decline in the willingness of other states to follow US leadership. On the other hand, if it appeared that the US, relying on Communist professions of peaceful intent, was about to reduce drastically its defense effort and its aid to its allies, the confidence of the Western Powers in US leadership

would be shaken. If, however, the US appeared willing to negotiate, in consultation with its allies, but at the same time appeared determined to maintain its military readiness and defensive posture, there would be little likelihood that the Communist "peace" tactics would separate the other Western Powers from the US, which is almost certainly a primary aim of these tactics.

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